

**Appendix Q. Final Natural Environment
Study for the Kings Beach
Commercial Core
Improvements Project**

**Final Natural Environment Study
for the Kings Beach Commercial Core
Improvements Project
03-PLA-28
KP 14.79/16.53 (PM 9.19/10.27)
EA 03-198-0C9300**

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FINAL NATURAL ENVIRONMENT STUDY

KINGS BEACH COMMERCIAL CORE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PLACER COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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SUMMARY

The Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project (Project) is located in the Community of Kings Beach along the north shore of Lake Tahoe in Placer County, California. The Project area boundaries are Chipmunk Street to the east; State Route 267 to the west; along a diagonal running west to east from Rainbow to Minnow Avenue to the north; and along the shoreline of Lake Tahoe, to the south. The Project area contains both residential and commercial properties.

The Project will include:

- Roadway improvements to SR 28 to:
 - Accommodate future transit, pedestrian and bicycle traffic;
 - Improve the aesthetic appearance of the Kings Beach SR 28 corridor; and
 - Improve erosion control conditions by decreasing the amount of sediment flow into creeks, ditches, storm drains and Lake Tahoe;
- Construction of on- and off-street parking sites; and
- Ditch lining and revegetation to further improve erosion control and protect community water resources.

The four alternatives being considered for the Project include:

- **Alternative 1:** No-Build/No-Project. The existing roadway configuration of SR 28 will remain unchanged.
- **Alternative 2:** Three-lane cross section of SR 28 with roundabouts at SR 267, Bear Street, and Coon Street. A bicycle lane approximately 5 ft wide and 18-ft sidewalk/planting area on both sides of SR 28. No on-street parking during the summer months along SR 28.
- **Alternative 3:** Four-lane cross section of SR 28 with traffic signals at SR 267, Bear Street, and Coon Street. Left-turn lanes would be provided on SR 28 at Fox Street. A 5-ft bicycle lane and sidewalk with a 5.4-ft minimum would be provided on both sides of SR 28. On-street parking would be permitted along both sides of SR 28.
- **Alternative 4:** No on-street parking. Identical to Alternative 2, except that on-street parking would be prohibited over the entire year (including winter).

This report presents the results of a series of biological inventories (April, May, and July, 2001; May, June, and September 2002; June 2004; October 2004; September 2005; and March 2006) conducted for the Project. These results characterize vegetation and wildlife habitat; identify the presence or absence of special-status plant and wildlife species and associated potential habitat; and identify and map late seral/old-growth trees (LSOGs), stream environment zones (SEZs), wetlands, and weedy plant species.

The Project area supports both native and non-native vegetation communities. Jeffrey pine and ponderosa pine dominate the overstory vegetation, with inclusions of incense-cedar and white fir. Ninety-one of these trees are LSOGs, an important natural community element. Understory vegetation includes both native and non-native shrubs and herbaceous plants, and is found on the few undeveloped lots, unpaved areas including corridors along roadways, and landscaped areas in and around developed sites.

Predominate wildlife habitats in the Project area include urban-altered Jeffrey pine forest and montane riparian (including SEZs). Griff Creek drainage comprises the principal SEZ in the Project area.

Regional vascular plant species of concern with the potential to occur in the Project area include Washoe tall rockcress (*Arabis rectissima* var. *simulans*), five moonwort species (upswept moonwort [*Botrychium ascendens*], scalloped moonwort [*Botrychium crenulatum*], slender moonwort [*Botrychium lineare*], Mangan moonwort [*Botrychium manganense*], and western goblin [*Botrychium montanum*]), subalpine fireweed (*Epilobium howellii*), and Tahoe yellow cress (*Rorippa subumbellata*). Regional nonvascular plant species of concern with potential habitat in the area include veined water lichen (*Peltigera hydrothyria*), Bolander's candle moss (*Bruchia bolanderi*), Blandow's helodium moss (*Helodium blandowii*), and broad-nerved hump-moss (*Meesia uliginosa*). Field surveys for all of these species conducted in 2001, 2002, 2004, and 2005 resulted in only three Tahoe yellow cress plants being found. These plants were located between Stateline Point and the California side of the Stateline—east of the Project study area.

Regional wildlife species and species groups of concern with potential to occur in the Project area include black bear (*Ursus americanus*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), osprey (*Pandion haliaeetus*), waterfowl, migratory birds, brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), and rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). Of these, osprey, waterfowl, migratory birds, and brook trout were observed during the field inventories conducted for the Project. Black bear are common in the Lake Tahoe Basin and could occasionally occur in the Project study area while foraging for garbage. Bald eagles could potentially occasionally roost in the area, but this is not highly likely due to the relatively degraded nature of the roosting habitat available. Rainbow trout could potentially occur in Griff Creek but were not detected during the field surveys for this study.

A tree inventory was conducted to identify conifers within the proposed Project area that would potentially be affected by the Project. Data collected included tree species, height, diameter-at-breast-height (dbh), and location. Trees of particular interest were those >30" dbh designated by the Lake Tahoe Regional Planning Agency as LSOGs. These trees are considered a special habitat of concern. For the purpose of this Project, all trees with dbh of 29 inches or greater were identified as LSOG trees. Ninety-one LSOGs were located within the biological study area during the tree inventory.

A protocol-level wetlands delineation and other waters of the United States survey of the Project area was conducted in 2001. Based on the results of this inventory, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) verified approximately 0.06 hectare (0.15 acre) of jurisdictional wetlands, one jurisdictional perennial stream, and a portion of one jurisdictional intermittent drainage that occur within the Project area. Additional inventories were conducted in 2002 and 2004 to

supplement the 2001 survey. These inventories identified additional sites within the Project area that could potentially be considered jurisdictional resources. We recommend that Placer County conduct one additional wetlands inventory to identify and delineate locations of potentially jurisdictional resources within the Project area. The results of this survey should then be verified by the Corps. The 5-year verification period should be adequate to allow the construction of Project elements.

Surveys for weedy plant species including noxious, invasive, and exotic species, identified annual and perennial weedy plant species and two California noxious weed species, diffuse knapweed and scotch broom.

With the completion of the September 2005 tree inventory, Placer County has conducted biological inventories within the proposed Project area in 4 of the last 5 years. The resource information collected during these inventories will provide the baseline data to support preparation of future NEPA and CEQA documents that will analyze the proposed Project.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1	Project Description.....	1
1.2	Project Purpose and Need	2
2.0	STUDY METHODS	3
2.1	Studies Required	3
2.1.1	Pre-Field Investigation.....	3
2.1.2	Vegetation and Special-Status Plant Surveys	3
2.1.3	Tree Inventory.....	5
2.1.4	Weedy Plants	5
2.2	Personnel and Survey Dates.....	6
2.3	Agency Coordination and Professional Contacts	6
2.4	Limitations That May Influence Results.....	6
2.4.1	Vegetation	7
2.4.2	Wildlife	7
3.0	ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING	9
3.1	Description of the Existing Biological and Physical Conditions.....	9
3.1.1	Biological Study Area.....	9
3.1.2	Physical Conditions	9
3.1.3	Biological Conditions in the Biological Study Area.....	10
3.2	Regional Context	13
4.0	RESULTS: BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES, DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION	23
4.1	Special-Status Species with Potential to Occur in the BSA	23
4.2	Natural Communities of Special Concern	27
4.2.1	Urban-Altered Jeffrey Pine Forest	27
4.2.2	Late Seral/Old-Growth Community	34
4.2.3	Stream Environment Zones.....	35
4.2.4	Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States.....	36
4.3	Special-Status Plant Species	37
4.3.1	Washoe Tall Rockcress.....	38
4.3.2	Upswept Moonwort	38
4.3.3	Scalloped Moonwort.....	39
4.3.4	Slender Moonwort	40
4.3.5	Mingan Moonwort	41
4.3.6	Western Goblin	41
4.3.7	Subalpine Fireweed.....	42
4.3.8	Tahoe Yellow Cress.....	43
4.3.9	Veined Water Lichen	44
4.3.10	Bolander's Candle Moss	45
4.4	Special-Status Wildlife Surveys	47

4.4.1	Black Bear.....	47
4.4.2	Waterfowl	48
4.4.3	Bald Eagle.....	48
4.4.4	Osprey	50
4.4.5	Migratory Birds.....	50
4.4.6	Trout.....	52
4.4.7	Weedy Plant Species.....	53
5.0	CUMULATIVE IMPACTS	55
6.0	RESULTS: PERMITS AND TECHNICAL STUDIES FOR SPECIAL LAWS OR CONDITIONS	57
6.1	Regulatory Requirements.....	57
6.2	Federal Endangered Species Act Consultation Summary	57
6.3	California Endangered Species Act Consultation Summary	57
6.4	California Department of Fish and Game Consultation Summary	58
6.5	Clean Water Act Consultation Summary.....	58
6.6	Wetlands and Other Waters Coordination	58
6.7	Other Regulatory Requirements	60
6.7.1	Late Seral/Old Growth Trees	60
6.7.2	Weedy Plant Species (Noxious, Invasive and Exotic Plants)	60
6.7.3	Vegetation Protection and Management	61
6.7.4	Sensitive and Uncommon Plant Protection and Fire Hazard Protection	61
6.7.5	Wildlife Resources.....	61
6.7.6	Fish Resources	62
6.7.7	Caltrans Right-of-Way	62
7.0	REFERENCES.....	63
7.1	Books and Journals	63
7.2	Personal Communications	66
7.3	World Wide Web Sources	67

List of Appendices

- Appendix A. Plant Species Observed within the Kings Beach BSA
- Appendix B. Wildlife Species Observed within the Kings Beach BSA
- Appendix C. Kings Beach Photographs
- Appendix D. Regional Species of Concern Consultation
- Appendix E. Corps Verification Letter
- Appendix F. Kings Beach Tree Inventory Report

List of Tables

Table 1. Vegetation Surveys for the Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project	4
Table 2. Regional Species and Natural Communities of Concern.....	15-23
Table 3. Special-Status Species with Potential to Occur in the BSA	25-26
Table 4. Project Element Tree Inventory Summary	29
Table 5. Mitigation, Minimization, and Avoidance Measures (MMAs) for Regional Plant Species, Wildlife Species, and Natural Communities of Concern.....	30
Table 6. Recent and Current Projects Identified within the Kings Beach Community	32-33

List of Figures

Figure 1. Kings Beach Vicinity and Location Map	2
Figure 2. Kings Beach Project Elements	2
Figure 3. Kings Beach Project Biological Resources	10
Figure 4. Regional Wildlife and Plant Species of Concern Habitat Map	10

List of Abbreviated Terms

Corps	Army Corp of Engineers
amsl	above mean sea-level
Be	Beach
BMP	Best Management Practice
BSA	biological study area
C	Candidate Species
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CCIP	Commercial Core Improvement Project
CDFA	California Department of Food and Agriculture
Cal-IPC	California Invasive Plant Council
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
Co	Cello gravelly loamy sand
Corps	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
dbh	diameter at breast height
DFG	California Department of Fish and Game
dnc	data not collected
E	Endangered Species
ESA	Endangered Species Act
<i>et seq.</i>	literally, "and the following"
Ev	wet variant
FP	Fully Protected
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
GP	General Permit
Gr	gravelly alluvial sand
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
IPES	Individual Parcel Evaluation System
JPN	Jeffrey pine
Lo	loamy alluvial sand
LOD	limits of disturbance
LSOG	late seral/old-growth tree
LTBMU	Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
MACTEC	MACTEC Engineering and Consulting, Inc.
MDB&M	Mount Diablo Baseline and Meridian
Mh	marsh
MIS	Management Indicator Species
MMA	Mitigation, Minimization, and Avoidance Measure
MRI	montane riparian
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service

ROW	right-of-way
SC	Species of Concern (USFWS)
SCS	Special Concern Species (DFG)
SEZ	stream environment zone
SI	Special Interest Species
sp.	species singular
spp.	species plural
SR	State Route
S	Sensitive Species
ssp.	sub-species
T	Threatened Species
TRPA	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
URB	urban
USC	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WOUS	Other Waters of the United States

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Description

The Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project (Project) is located in the community of Kings Beach along the north shore of Lake Tahoe in Placer County, California. The boundaries for the Project area include Chipmunk Street to the east; SR 267 to the west; along the northern edge running diagonally west to east from Rainbow to Minnow Avenue; and along the shoreline of Lake Tahoe, south of SR 28 (Figure 1). Specifically, the Project area is located in portions of the Northeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 13, Township 16 North, Range 17 East, Mount Diablo Baseline and Meridian (MDB&M), and the West $\frac{1}{2}$ of Section 19, Township 16 North, Range 18 East, MDB&M.

The Project area covers approximately 325.77 hectares (805 acres), contains residential and commercial properties, and receives high vehicular and pedestrian traffic year-round. Project components include SR 28 improvements and on- and off-street Project elements within the Project area. On-street elements include angled and parallel parking and drainage ditches. Off-street elements are parking lots. The four alternatives being considered for SR 28 improvements include the following:

- **Alternative 1:** No-Build/No-Project. The existing roadway configuration of SR 28 will remain unchanged.
- **Alternative 2:** Three-lane cross section of SR 28 with roundabouts at SR 267, Bear Street, and Coon Street. A bicycle lane approximately 1.52-m (5-ft) wide and 5.49-m (18-ft) sidewalk/planting area on both sides of SR 28. No on-street parking during the summer months along SR 28.
- **Alternative 3:** Four-lane cross section of SR 28 with traffic signals at SR 267, Bear Street, and Coon Street. Left-turn lanes would be provided on SR 28 at Fox Street. A 1.52-m (5-ft) bicycle lane and sidewalk with a 1.65-m (5.4-ft) minimum would be provided on both sides of SR 28. On-street parking would be permitted along both sides of SR 28.
- **Alternative 4:** No on-street parking. Identical to Alternative 2, except that on-street parking would be prohibited over the entire year (including winter).

Under all alternatives except Alternative 1, Brook Avenue from Bear Street to Coon Street would be converted to one-way eastbound.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and Placer County undertook a comprehensive screening process to evaluate alternative configurations in order to select the four alternatives that would be given consideration during the environmental review process. These alternatives were selected on their ability to meet the Project objectives. In addition, other factors were considered, such as cost, environmental impacts, operational efficiency, segmentability of the Project during construction, and maintainability of the alternatives. Based on this process, Caltrans identified the previously “built” alternatives for environmental review. At the end of the process, a final selection of a preferred alternative will be made, and other alternatives considered will be withdrawn. Figure 2 illustrates the Project area boundaries, the SR 28 improvement corridor, and proposed on- and off-street Project element locations.

The combined California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for this Project is scheduled to be completed in December 2006. Construction activities would commence upon the completion of final engineering designs for the preferred alternative and the completion of all required permitting and right-of-way acquisition activities.

1.2 Project Purpose and Need

The Kings Beach Project is necessary for the following reasons:

- Improved stormwater runoff will assist Placer County in meeting Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) or Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (LRWQB) water quality standards;
- Improved traffic circulation, pedestrian and bicycle mobility will be provided for safer traffic, pedestrian and bicycle utilization of the State Route (SR) 28 corridor;
- Improved scenic and aesthetics will provide a more pleasing community to area residents, tourists and business owners, and assist Placer County in meeting TRPA scenic thresholds for this segment of SR 28; and
- Additional on and off-street parking facilities will provide area business owners, residents and tourists with replacement parking as a result of parking lost along SR 28.



Figure 1
Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project
Vicinity and Location Map

